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The following information details events which have secretly occured in East Timor in preparation for the visit. Please note that many of these incidents are still occuring as we write, and will continue irrespective of whether the delegation's visit takes place.

We also believe that the only way these abuses of human rights can be curbed would be by the long-term presence of objective foreign observers who would monitor events to ensure that further atrocities do not take place without some form of accountability and scrutiny.

1. MILITARY PRESENCE

The presence of the military is absolutely overwhelming, and is evidenced in every village, town and roadside throughout the island.

We were told there are now 94 battallions of soldiers stationed in East Timor, with additional artillery, tanks and other military equipment which has been brought in as part of the preparations for the visit. This is over and above the documented 10,000 troops which have been maintained on the island for the last 16 years, apparently to control 200 Fretilin anti-integrationists.

In the small town of Bacau alone, we were told nine (9) new battalions have been installed outside Baucau for monitoring the 100km stretch of road between Baucau and Viqueque.

We witnessed truckloads of soldiers trundling through the streets of Dili, battalions exercising in village squares, massive freighters in Dili harbour for unloading heavy military vehicles, and all along the road throughout the island we saw small squadrons of soldiers moving either openly or surreptitiously through the bush in full camouflage uniform.

In village squares and military compounds we saw local Timorese force-marched and assembled. In some instances it appeared they were being trained in military style display marching and in other villages we saw locals being addressed in large groups by military personnel, or overseen in their work in the rice-paddies or road gangs by soldiers.

To conceal evidence of their presence, we were also told the military are dumping all disused military equipment which indicates previous military engagements in the sea in remote areas. Thus all evidence of the past 16 years of war has been effectively removed.

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Dr Jose Luis Gomez,
Ambassador of Portugal,
Canberra, ACT.

October 31, 1991

Dear Dr Gomez,

Further to our conversation yesterday we are writing to inform you about recent events that have been taking place in East Timor with respect to preparations for the now cancelled visit by the UN/Portuguese Parliamentary Delegation, and to urge you to stress to the Portuguese government the importance of reversing their decision to cancel this incredibly important and timely visit.

As I mentioned on the telephone, we are three filmmakers who were present in Dili during the shooting of the two Timorese men in the Motael Church at approximately 2.30 am on the morning of Monday, October 28.

We witnessed events prior to the shooting, and in the hours immediately afterwards, and believe that the Indonesian authorities issued a press release admitting responsibility for the killings only as a result of our presence, and recognition that they would suffer severe embarrassment as a result of our eye-witness account of hearing gun-shots and alarm bells.

Our account directly contradicts their initial assertion that there was a riot, the police were summoned at the Church's request, and the two men were killed by stones and knives. We are absolutely certain that there was no riot, and in fact we watched people being summoned by alarm bells ringing at the Church for over half an hour with great urgency and vigour.

Moreover, we were present at the Motael Church that same afternoon, recording on video a church service by a priest who is known to be sympathetic to the Timorese people, and on the night of the killings had provided haven to some Timorese people who had felt their lives threatened by the military.

During our stay in East Timor between October 23 -30, we witnessed this event and many others, and received information and accumulated evidence which confirms without doubt that the consequences of the cancellation of the visit will be absolutely devastating to the East Timorese people, who believe that the visit is the first genuine indication that the international community is finally taking an interest in their plight.

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2. SURVEILLANCE AND INTIMIDATION TACTICS

We have enclosed a document which details the extent of the secret surveillance and initimidation tactics which are currently being imposed on the indigenous Timorese.

Our observations and communications with the few Timorese who were prepared to risk their lives to talk to us entirely verifies the information in this document. We also witnessed open intimidation of indigenous Timorese, and experienced constant surveillance and interrogation by individuals who were very obviously non-Timorese, and in some instances openly admitted that they were from other islands in Indonesia. They were the only people who spoke to us openly, and they were very identifiably Indonesian in their dress, physical features and apparent affluence.

The few Timorese people who did speak to us to provide street directions etc admitted that they were in danger in being seen to be speaking to us. One young man actually said, "I must go, we've been having meetings that tell us we cannot speak to you. It's getting dark now and my life is in danger." As we walked away we saw this young man was immediately physically grabbed and questioned by other men who had been watching him talk to us.

In another instance a young girl attempted to present us with a tape cassette, but stopped out of fear of surveillance and reprisal.

We witnessed individuals speaking into communication devices secreted in their clothing (ie. shirts, jackets etc). We also noted many vehicles and taxis with crudely painted wooden number plates that could be removed and changed to avoid identification of the car, and other four (4) wheel drive cars with dark tinted windows and spotlights which pointed towards the side of the road and footpaths.

These vehicles were driven by non-Timorese who would yell greetings at us and follow us as we walked down streets in Dili. On the morning of the Motael Church killings we observed many of these vehicles cruising the streets, along with taxis and individuals on motor-bikes. Given the 9pm curfew which had resulted in us being forced to walk back to our hotel because of the absence of taxis earlier in the evening, we found this preponderance of traffic both curious and disconcerting.

We have also received information that in all the houses in Dili up to two (2) or three (3) soldiers have been installed to monitor the household and ensure that no covert activity takes place in the form of organisation of demonstrations against integration during the delegation's visit, and to closely observe and control the local population from within their own homes.

3. CONTROL OF THE EAST COAST

While we were in Baucau we received information that 50 metre pits have been dug in the beach five (5) kilometres from the village. The purpose of these pits is to bury the people who are targetted for reprisals after the delegation's visit. We were told similar pits have been dug in the beaches near Dili and other coastal townships.

We were also told that many people in Baucau with Portuguese names have disappeared without trace. Up to 18 had disappeared in the two weeks prior to our arrival, and many witnesses had seen these people taken from public places such as the market. No reason has been given for their disappearance.

The other information we received in Baucau was that the local people are terrified of any form of contact in public places because crowd infiltrators move among the people, secretly injecting them with needles. People who have been injected in this way have subsequently become ill and died.

4. PROPAGANDA AND ANTI-PORTUGAL MEETINGS

We were told the military have been holding regular meetings in village squares whereby the local population are harangued with threats and anti-Portugal propaganda. They are also given deliberately misleading information about the delegation's visit...long before the visit was cancelled they were given daily bulletins claiming the Portugal had cancelled the visit, or that there was talk of a referendum over self-determination, and then that Portugal had cancelled the referendum.

The intent is obviously to confuse the people, and to impose a form of psychological torture, knowing how much importance the Timorese people are placing on the visit and the publicity it would be receiving from world press.

During these meetings the local people are forced to chant pro-integration slogans. They are told they cannot have any contact with foreigners on pain of punishment or death, they must fly Indonesian flags from their homes and they must perform dances and songs for the foreigners which indicate their pleasure in being integrated with Indonesia and resentment at 'interferance' by Portugal and other countries.

We witnessed one of these meetings in the small mountain village of Maubisse, where a nine (9) day fair has been organised to coincide with the visit. A compound has been set up which is lined with stalls showing Indonesian political propaganda and selling appropriated Timorese art. From 6am to 11pm the local people are being forced to dance and sing by the military stationed in Maubisse, who took our visit as an opportunity to hold a dress rehearsal for events that would have presumably taken place during the visit by the delegation.

On the afternoon of our arrival in Maubisse we were taken on a tour of the fair by the local Chief of Security. He subsequently invited himself to accompany us to take some scenic pictures of Mt Ramelau. We were not given any choice about whether we desired his presence, and in fact we found it impossible not to be accompanied by either him or other military personnel.

We arrived back in the village at exactly the time that a meeting was taking place in which the people were being harangued and forced to cheer and chant pro-integration slogans. We were immediately surrounded by police and military and ushered from the car by the Lieutenant of the local battalion into a restuarant where we were forced to eat with the soldiers and police until the meeting was finished.

Later in the evening we were guided around the fair, and the local people were made to dance for our video camera, sing songs and generally perform. This continued for several hours, and we observed that the people were being forced to sleep in the township, rather than return to their homes.

We were profoundly shocked by the treatment of the local people by the military during this 'cultural display'. Although it was only Day 2 of the nine (9) day fair, the Timorese people were already showing signs of total exhaustion, and the military herded them around and forced them to perform for us as if they were puppets or playthings, who could be manipulated through command and threat.

5. MISAPPROPRIATION OF INTERNATIONAL AID

The most obvious impression upon arrival in East Timor is of the Timorese people's extreme poverty and starvation. Along the east coast they live in arid resettlement villages where there is very little subsistance farming.

In the mountains their villages are surrounded by hillsides which have been deliberately burnt for kilometres (we were told this was done by the military to clear away foliage that could conceal guerillas), and reduced into blackened, denuded slopes littered with destroyed rice paddies and abandoned coffee plantations.

We were told the Indonesian military deliberately maintain this poverty and denundation of farming areas in order to justify the Indonesian government's requests for aid from international human rights organisations.

The money that has been received in the past has not been allocated to the people, and in fact has found its way into the pockets of the military authorities who have already appropriated the Timorese people's land and businesses, reducing them to the status of labourers on the roads, bridges and administrative buildings which are proudly displayed as evidence of how Indonesia has brought development to Timor.

6. THE PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION

It is of vital importance that Portugal revokes its decision to cancel the visit by the Parliamentary Delegation. The Timorese people believe their very survival against deliberate genocide entirely depends on this visit and some expression of interest in their plight by the international community.

We note Portugal's concern over censorship and reprisals that have been taking place in preparation for the visit, which would appear to negate any positive outcome from the delegation's mission.

However, we must emphasise that the repression will continue unabated, regardless of whether the visit takes place or not.

The Timorese people are fully aware that these reprisals will take place, but are nevertheless prepared to risk their lives to make contact with the outside world, simply so that some form of dialogue can take place.

If the arguement over Jill Jolliffe's inclusion in the delegation is allowed to cause the cancellation of the visit the interpretation will be that Portugal and the UN have used this arguement as an excuse to irrevokably turn their backs on the situation in East Timor, and the sense of betrayal which will be felt by the Timorese people will be incredibly profound.

Morover, the violations of human rights which have been occuring for the last 16 years by the Indonesian military occupiers will be essentially vindicated, with the inference that they can be allowed to continue with the tacit consent of Portugal and the rest of the international community, without any form of protest or accountability.

In this way the lives which have already been lost in the lead-up to the visit will have been sacrificed for no purpose.

The political consequences for Portugal with the cancellation of the visit are very alarming and should be noted. The Indonesian military authorities are capitalising on the cancellation of the visit to denegrate Portugal's political 'face' with the international community by inferring that Portugal is "afraid" to visit East Timor.

To prove this point we have enclosed a copy of an article that appeared in the Indonesian Times on October 29 which outlines Indonesia's obvious contempt for Portugal's position, and the manner in which Indonesia is interpreting the circumstances behind the visit to the world press.

Again, we urge Portugal to respond to this flagrant abuse of its interest and concern over the situation in East Timor.

(See page 8)

Indonesia Post 28/10/91

Alatas says he doubts Portuguese parliamentarians' good will

JAKARTA — Foreign Minister Ali Alatas said on Monday that he doubted the good-will of Portugal's members of parliament who had postponed their planned visit to East Timor, former Portuguese colony, on November 4.

Minister Alatas said that he had not received any official letter from the Portuguese government about the postponement of the visit, and that he knew it from the press reports.

The French news agency, AFP, reported on Saturday that the president of the Portuguese Assembly Victor Crespo had decided to put off the East Timor visit that would include a fact-finding team of the United Nations until Indonesia revoked its refusal for entry of a Lisbon-based Australian journalist, Jill Jolliffe.

"Jolliffe, reportedly a correspondent for "The Age" in Melbourne," does not represent a journalist, because she is a Fretilin. Indonesia has every right to refuse entry of any foreign journalist it does not like joining the Portuguese legislators during their visit to East Timor," Alatas said.

"The same is true with the Lisbon government, they could always reject any foreign journalist chosen by Indonesian to join the team," he added.

Saying that it was in line with the tripartite agreement reached in New York between Indonesia, the United Nations, and Portugal, Alatas said that "if the cancellation of the visit is true" then it would be the second postponement by the Portuguese government to visit its former colony since 1967.

East Timor, which lies in the eastern part of Indonesia's Timor island, was formerly Portugal's colony of 600,000 people. East Timor integrated itself into Indonesia in 1976, following the withdrawal of the Lisbon government withdrew from the territory, shortly after the outbreak of a civil war in the colony.

Speaking to reporters after attending a reception of the National Day of the Republic of Czecho and Slovakia, Alatas said Indonesia "does not intend to create difficult circumstances to the Portuguese legislators to visit East Timor".

An advance team comprising Portuguese and U.N. officials visited East Timor last week to prepare for the November visit by Lisbon legislators. Members of the team had expressed their good impressions on the development achieved by East Timor, currenty Indonesia's 27th provinces.

BREACH OF AGREEMENT

Meanwhile, deputy House Speaker R. Soekardi said on Monday that he it was unethical on the part of Portugal to breach the agreement already reached in New York.

"The sovereignty of East Timor as an integrated part of the Republic of Indonesia is an undeniable fact and would not be affected by Portugal's action," Soekardi said.

Another Indonesian diplomat, Lopez da Cruz, said that Jakarta denied Jolliffe's Indonesia entry because she was very much anti the Jakarta government and that she was a supporter of Fretilin, a pro-communist group that once tried to set up a country in East Timor.

Lopez da Cruz, who was formerly deputy vice governor of the province, said that it was only the Lisbon government's pretext to cancell its legislators' visit to East Timor because of Jakarta's refusal of Jill Jolliffe.

"Actually they (the Portuguese parliamentarians) are afraid to come to East Timor," he added. [Ant/01]

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In conclusion we urge not only Portugal but also the United Nations and all international human rights organisations to consider our report and take immediate action to resolve the terrible tragedy that is East Timor today.

The people are caught in a noose that has tightened to a degree that is unprecedented in the history of a nation that has already undergone the most tragic violations of human rights to have taken place since World War II.

For the sake of those who are prepared to accept their own extermination if it means the world will at least recognise their horror, we urge you to take immediate action.

Yours sincerely,

Gina Roncoli Lois Randall Francisco Vidinha